

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**SHIFTING GEARS PROJECT
LAWRENCE**

**INFORMANT: HELEN MIGLIORESE
INTERVIEWER: YILDEREY ERDENER
DATE: APRIL 21, 1988**

**Y = YILDEREY
H = HELEN**

SG-LA-T550

Y: Today is April 21st? 21st, yeah. April 21st, 19, 1988. We are at Elder Aldrich Program, which is located on, what is the address?

H: What?

Y: The address?

H: Address here?

Y: Yeah. I think it is uh, Haverhill Senior Citizen Center, or it is called also Elder Aldrich Program. Whatever name. Okay. And uh, my guest is uh, Helen uh, (--)

H: Migliorese. [Repeats name with Italian accent]

Y: How do you spell it?

H: M-I-G-L-I-O-R-E-S-E.

Y: Yeah. Okay, uh, can you uh, this microphone is not very sensitive. Can you tell me where and when, what is your birthplace and date? And when did you come to the United States? And the first years here in Lawrence, all these early years, although it was a long time ago. So as long as, I mean whatever you remember.

H: Well I come her 1913. I was six years old. I came from the old country. [Gavie LaRosa]. That's in Italy, Sicily.

Y: Yeah. That is the place where you were born?

H: Yes, Vie LaRosa, Sicily. Yes. And I came here I was six years old.

Y: Six years old. (H: Yes) With your parents and your sisters?

H: I came here with my mother and my other sister. She's three years younger than I. (Y: Yeah, yeah) My father was here originally. My father had a store on Common Street. Variety store, you know, there.

Y: Yeah. So he came before you?

H: Well yes, he came before us. Yes.

Y: And then he send money to you?

H: Yes, my mother and I. We landed at the battery in New York. Yes.

Y: Yeah. Any stories, any difficulties? You know, people have stories how they came to the United States. And do you have such family stories?

H: Well I know there was trouble on the boat. We came on a boat, but there was trouble in the boat. And they put, they put us on a, those school row boats there with ships to go down. And that's why ever since I've been scared of the water and boats. [Laughs] Since I came here.

Y: Do you remember those boats? When you six years old you were a little girl. Yeah.

H: Yeah, I remember it. Sure, I remember. I remember going into the battery. And my mother was sick at that time, you know, we couldn't get out of there. But I wasn't sick. And I used to go and eat everybody's breakfast. I was only six years old.

Y: Yeah. So you came with your sister, or sisters?

H: Yes, my sister. She's three years younger than I. Her name is Lucy Milino.

Y: Well she's here. You are going to meet her today?

H: No, these are my younger sisters, the twins. They're babies, they were born here. (Y: Oh) Yeah, they're going to pick me up.

Y: So how many sisters and brothers (--)

H: We have five sisters and two boys. Yup. One boy is in California, and the other one is in uh (--). Oh, where is Kennedy live there?

Y: Oh, anyway. And the [unclear] are here in Lawrence?

H: Yeah, the three sisters are here.

Y: Yeah, and you didn't work?

H: I am the oldest.

Y: You are.

H: Eighty-one years old.

Y: Where are the brothers? (H: Huh?) Brothers, where are they?

H: Oh, my, one is in California, and the other one is in [unclear], Mass.

[Interview is interrupted]

H: Don't bother with them.

Y: Yeah.

Unknown voice: Excuse me, Helen.

[Tape is turned off and on again]

Y: Well we moved from one place to the other. Now we are in a new room. And uh, uh, we were interrupted in other words. Can you tell me about your mother and father, what kind of persons were they? I mean can you tell me a little bit?

H: My mother died she was thirty-six years old. She was awfully young.

Y: Why did she (--)

H: She had appendix, you know, and she was pregnant again? We were seven children she left, you know? And one died with her. She was so young. I mean uh (--)

Y: How old were you?

H: I was thirteen when my mother died. Yeah, very young. She, she was always in the stores sewing baby things, you know, by hand and everything.

Y: Did your father get married?

H: No, he did not get married again. No. But seven children.

Y: But anyway, when uh, when did you start working?

H: I think I was about fourteen, fourteen and a half years old. I went to school in the Oliver

School here. And I went as far as the fifth grade I guess, you know, then I left to go to work. I went to work at the wood mill as a doffer. (Y: Yeah) I don't know how long I worked there. It wasn't long. Then I worked in the Ayer Mill as a doffer too.

Y: Yeah, we were disrupted too much. Did you, did you tell me when were you born? What year?

H: 1913.

Y: 1913. Did you tell me that before? I miss that?

H: Yeah, I did. It was 1913. I was six years old when I came here.

Y: Yeah, right. So you started at the age of fourteen?

H: Yeah, fourteen, fourteen and a half.

Y: It was then uh, uh, twenty-seven, 1927?

H: 1920, no. 19, I got married at '22, uh, 1922.

Y: Yeah, well if you were born in 1913.

H: I was six. Six, seven, eight, nine. Six, seven, eight, nine ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen. I was thirteen years old, thirteen, and at fourteen that's uh, thirteen, fourteen. 1907 I was born. 1907. And I came her 1913.

Y: So you started in 1921?

H: That's it, see. Yeah.

Y: Yeah. And then how long did you work?

H: I didn't work long at all. I mean.

Y: Yeah, it doesn't matter where. How long?

H: Yeah, maybe about three months on the Wood Mill, (Y: Yeah) and then I went to the Ayer Mill and I worked another four months there. I was a little wild kid, I'm telling you. [Laughs]

Y: Well we were wild when [few words unclear].

H: I mean uh, I used to love movies. I used to love to go to the movies.

Y: Yeah?

H: Yup. I used to call myself Helen Hayes. [Laughs]

Y: Well what did you do? In those days you couldn't be too wild.

H: No, I mean.

Y: I mean what could you do?

H: Nothing. I mean I used to play hooky sometimes from school. I used to go to the movies.

Y: Yeah? So you quit the job to go to the movies? No.

H: No, when (--) No, I did that while I was going to school. I mean I, you know, I used to play hooky and I used to go to school. If my sisters ever hear that they'll kill me.

Y: What is it? Hooky you say?

H: Yeah, you know that, you get out of school? (Y: Yeah?) You play hooky. That's what they called it.

Y: What is that? I don't know.

H: You, how could I put it? When you get out of school, you know, you don't go to school, you stay out. Play hooky. They call it hooky. You're absent.

Y: Yeah, what did you do? I mean when you on that?

H: Nothing. I mean I used to go to the movies. Nothing. I used to play marbles with the boys in the common. [Chuckles]

Y: And what kind of movies? Uh, there were many movie theaters?

H: Oh, Eddy Polo, Pearl White, that's a long long time ago you know. Oh, silent movies.

Y: Silent movies.

H: There used to be a movie house right on Newbury Street.

Y: How many uh, you would guess? How many movie theaters you would guess at that time existed in Lawrence? One, two, or three, or five, or (--)

H: Oh no. I used to go to the movies there on Newbury Street, on Broadway I used to go to the movies? That's all.

Y: How much did you pay? Do you remember?

H: Well I don't remember. Oh, they were five cents to get in. Ten cents. Yeah, years ago, yeah! They used to have the sign there on Broadway. They should have never take that sign from the movies, for the pictures I gave you. (Y: Uh huh) Yeah.

Y: Yeah. Can you tell me if you remember about work conditions in the Wood Mill, or Ayer Mill? What do you remember from those days?

H: Well I, in those days I mean people had to walk to work, you know. (Y: Yeah) They walked to work and everything. And the conditions like they say, the Italians with the Irish, they used to(--). At that time I didn't, I didn't know from nothing at that time. I was young. I didn't care, you know. But uh, they suffered. People suffered. All the people (--) Yeah, I remember some woman, she used to go to work, she used to come home and she used to come nurse her baby. I used to see her. Nurse her baby. She used to come from work, lunch, (Y: Yeah) and she used to go, I remember she used to nurse her baby.

Y: During (H: outside) the lunch time?

H: Huh?

Y: During the lunch time?

H: Yeah. She used to come home from work. She used to nurse the kid, go back to work. I remember that.

Y: Yeah. Yeah. Where did you live? I mean uh, when you were working where did you live with your family?

H: Yeah, I lived on Com, on Common Street.

Y: Common Street? And so it took just uh, how many, how long to walk to the mill?

H: Did I walk?

Y: How long did you walk from your house to Common Street?

H: Well from Common Street, way up to the thing. How long, over the bridge, you know. I don't know.

Y: Yeah, whatever. Uh, Common Street uh (--)

H: Common Street is right there. The corner of Newbury Street. And then you go down Essex Street, and you go up Union Street and go to work. It's a Merrimack Street shop.

Y: You got married after working three months in Wood Mill and four months in (--)

H: No, and then I, I got married I was sixteen, sixteen and a half. Yup. And I went, after I got

married I went to work in the, to that Pacific Mill. You know, there with the girl, drop wires in the material there. You drop the wires and then the frame would go it'd make the material, you know, with the wires you'd put in each thread. You'd put wires, drop the wires. The wires was like this, and you'd drop them.

Y: That is, that is the job you did in the Wood Mill?

H: In the Wood Mill, yeah. In the, in the(--) Yeah. Not, not too exciting, is it?

Y: Well did you like your job, or dislike it, or what?

H: Oh well I, I was all right. I cared for it, but then, then I didn't work long at the thing there, because after my husband didn't want me to work, you know? So that's it, that's all.

Y: So you quit working?

H: Yeah, I quit.

Y: What did he do?

H: Took care of my kids?

Y: I mean what kind of job he uh, your husband, what kind of job he had?

H: Oh, my husband was working with an undertaker years ago. Now he's dead now as you know. He died in '66 my husband. He was, he was a driver.

Y: Driver? (H: for, yeah) What was his name? His name?

H: John. John Migliorese. Yeah. He worked [unclear]. Will you, will you, will you shut that, are you going to shut this off?

Y: It's uh, uh (--)

H: How do I say. When my daughter was eight months my husband was out of a job. Okay? So somebody was moving to New York with the truck and all. And they said they had room for us. And we put all of our furniture, furniture and all in the truck and we went to New York, because, for my husband to get a job.

Y: Did he get a job?

H: Yes. He was a long shoreman. [Unclear]

Y: Yeah. How many children did you have altogether?

H: I had four children, three boys and one girl. And I lost a son, fifty years old. The odds. (Y:

Fifty?) Fifty, fifty years old. Never sick in his life. Had a, was driving, come in the driveway, he didn't get out.

Y: Anyway uh, I don't want to remind you of this, things which make you sad. Now let's go back to the Wood Mill. Could you relax there? Could you talk to people next to you, to other girls? Could you tell jokes, or I'm curious. How(--)

H: No, they were all there sitting down there. You know, they used to eat while working. (Y: Yeah) You know? They never, they used to eat while working.

Y: Did you also eat something while you (--)

H: Yeah, I mean. Really, it's so long ago I really, sometime you don't remember. I'm eighty-one years old now, you know. (Y: Yeah, because uh, yeah) And uh, I know when I used to go on doff, the spinners didn't like me to go, because I couldn't get that thread around the bobbin. And when they'd start the frame the thread would bread and they'd have to piece them up, you know. (Y: Yeah, yeah) That's what I remember.

Y: Yeah, people, some people told me that they could go to the bathroom and sing there and learn new dance steps, and tell jokes.

H: They would go there to the bathroom?

Y: Yeah. (H: Yeah?) From work. Do you remember such things?

H: No, I don't remember. That I don't remember. I remember when I worked in the Raytheon in 1959. I remember in Raytheon. I worked there three years.

Y: In Raytheon?

H: In Raytheon. (Y: Yeah) Yup, in Andover where [unclear].

Y: Yeah. What did you do in there?

H: I was a solderer in platters. You know, we used to make big platters. They all solder with the wires. Connect the wires for the, for the navy, the army, I don't know what it was for that time.

Y: Did you know what you produced? I mean what was the end product? What did you do? Just solder [unclear].

H: Just solder and then pass them along. I put one solder and then pass them along in the line. Assembly line. And they'd go in the end. But I know it was for the service, for the, I don't know if it was for the Army, what they did. It was like a platter like this.

Y: How big you say?

H: You know? Now this wide, right.

Y: It's like one and a half feet?

H: This wide, and this like this. And it go like this.

Y: Yeah, but you don't know what it was? Radio, or uh (--)

H: No, no. It was something for the Army. It was no radio. Umhm, no. Now the Western Electric does uh, for telephone you know, now, AT&T. But they didn't do, I don't know. They did, they did for the government.

Y: I'm curious uh (--) Yeah. (H: They worked for the government, they did those things) I'm, I'm curious how you know, how many times you soldered. Can you describe those?

H: Oh! In one solder there I had about (--) They changed me and he put me, in one place I solder, I had about eighty point soldering. Eighty. And my nose used to run, you know, from that solder. (Y: Yeah?) Yeah.

Y: Why uh, why does your (--)

H: The soldering was, the fumes go in my nose.

Y: Yeah. I guess since I did not see such a thing I cannot imagine exactly. Uh, did you have an electric soldering machine in your hand? (H: I had uh, yeah, yeah I had no) Well how did it go?

H: Yes. You put, you take, there was a little lead like, you know? (Y: Uh huh) And then you put that hot thing there and you hold this and you solder, you know, in the points. You put the points, and solder there.

Y: Yeah. So did they train you how to do soldering, or which points you should solder?

H: Well yeah, they had them there you know?

Y: So that you did not need any training? Any training after uh(--) You did not work in such place.

H: In the training?

Y: No, I mean in order to work in Raytheon, did they train you how to do that job? What to do?

H: Yeah, they showed you how to do it?

Y: But it took just couple of minutes or so?

H: That's all, you know? (Y: Yeah) I was a good worker.

Y: You were? Why?

H: [Laughing] I worked for three years without one day off. I never took one day off. Three years I worked. '59 to then when I asked for a leave of absence. Remember I told you? (Y: Yeah) And uh, hmhm. They don't want to know why they didn't want to give me a leave of absence. I says, so finally they did give me a leave of absence. I told you, from uh, I think it was the end of sixty-two, from uh, leave of absence from that day. I don't know, remember the day, I don't remember that day. (Y: Well you don't need to) But two ?, they put a question mark. I went, I went to Las Vegas because my son was living there. So I was there for awhile.

Y: So you worked between 1959 to '62?

H: Yeah, at the end of sixty-two. I worked three years there. (Y: three years) '59, '60, 1, 2, 3. And I was, I went by my son. (Y: Yeah) Yeah. That's, that thing in '62, that book right there. Yeah. And uh, I went by my son, and then I stayed by my son, and by my son I had uh, after awhile you know, when they call, you know, they got in touch with me to, the Raytheon. And I didn't get in touch with them and everything, so they terminated me. When they terminated me I went to start to collect. I collected one check they said, they stopped it. They said I went to a resort, you know? So I told them, I wrote back. I says my son was in Las Vegas, I wanted to go, leave of absence. If my son was in Alaska, I would have gone to Alaska I said. So then I wrote them a thing that I'm going to come back here. In 1963 I came back of April first, and I went to the court, wherever it is, you know, to fight them. And I won. I collected twenty-two checks all at once because I was right.

Y: Yeah. Did you like your job at Raytheon better than the mill [unclear]?

H: The mill, oh well of course the mills, I was young. Yeah, I did like it at Raytheon.

Y: Yeah? (H: Yeah) It wasn't boring to solder all the time?

H: No. We used, we used to have fun there in Raytheon. (Y: How?) Yeah, well we used to kid around. [chuckling] I'm not going to tell you these things.

Y: Then tell me these things. You know these are, these are (--)

H: No, because we, we used to [laughing] (--) (Y: You don't uh) We used to have plugs, you know, we used to plug there. We used to cook something there and everything. We used to make coffee and everything. Underneath (--)

Y: While you were working?

H: Yeah. Underneath we had a plug you know, we used to plug it. [Laughs]

Y: Well making coffee is not a big deal.

H: Yeah, well we, we used to heat up a lot of things there too.

Y: Like chicken and other things?

H: [Laughing] Don't let me talk. [Unclear]

Y: No, they're not going to arrest you. I'm not going to tell them that Helen did these things twenty years ago.

H: [Laughing]

Y: I mean that was uh, sixty what? Twenty-seven years ago. Nobody can uh (--)

H: Yeah. And then I came back. I went back. On April 1st I came back, and then I got a job in DeMoulas. I was a meat wrapper for DeMoulas.

Y: Yeah. Well tell me more about Raytheon. That's uh (--) You know, I told you I'm interested how the textile changed into high technology. And let me first ask you, what was your response when the textile mills closed, shut down and went to the south. What was your first reaction. Do you remember? It was a long time ago also.

H: Well it's so long ago I wasn't there when it closed down.

Y: Where were you?

H: No, I wasn't here when it closed down?

Y: You were not in Lawrence?

H: No, I was in New York. (Y: Oh!) I told you. I came back.

Y: But I thought you stayed eight months in New York. You said uh, with your husband you went there.

H: No, my daughter was eight years old.

Y: Oh I see, yeah.

H: When I went there. I stayed in Las Vegas, I was there about eight months.

Y: But when you came back and you saw that all the mills were shut down (--)

H: Yeah, everything is changed. It's unbelievable.

Y: Yeah

H: It's a shame, that's what I say.

Y: What things, what things were changed? I mean do you remember anything? These are old, a long time ago. If you remember. If you don't(--)

H: No, everything is changed now. Now is everything changed.

Y: I mean what is everything? Tell me.

H: Streets. Lawrence. The houses. The people. Come on now. That's what's changed.

Y: How, I mean how did people changed?

H: Years ago I used to walk 1:30 in the morning. (Y: Yeah) You can't walk at 1:30 in the morning now. (Y: Why not?) Why not, hey! You get mugged. [Laughs]

Y: I mean were people more friendlier, more helpful.

H: Well at that time yes! Yes, yes, yes. Yes, they were closer.

Y: Closer?

H: People are close at that time. Now everybody's (--)

Y: Why do you think they changed?

H: I don't know. That's my estimation. I don't know.

Y: Yeah. And back to the Raytheon. Did it require more attention? I mean if you did not pay enough attention, did you solder your finger or uh (--)

H: Oh, now what are you talking? I almost burned myself here once.

Y: Your chest? (H: Yeah, right here) How?

H: I don't know what happened. All of a sudden the iron almost burned here. I don't know what it was?

Y: So you were spaced out and then uh, (--)

H: I had them bring me up to the doctor.

Y: Was it a serious injury?

H: Yeah, well I don't know. I don't know how it happened. You see the iron, it was a long iron, long iron with a point. And then when you put the thing in there. I don't know, I put it down wrong, or what, I almost burned myself. But thank God nothing happened.

Y: Yeah. How was the pay? Did they pay well?

H: Not too much. (Y: So in 1960?) It's better there now.

Y: What \$1.25, or \$2.00?

H: Gee, \$1.35 I was given in DeMoulas for crying out loud in 1963. I started with a \$1.35 on DeMoulas.

Y: Yeah. What about Raytheon? Well how much did they pay?

H: That was less there.

Y: Less? Umhm. And uh (--)

H: But now DeMoulas is paying plenty, now good. At that time I says to Mike DeMoulas, "he Mike, I'm only getting a \$1.35 I says." "Well that's all, yeah." I got a raise the next week.

Y: Yeah, who's Mike?

H: DeMoulas. Mike DeMoulas, the big boss. (Y: The big boss) He was a nice man. (Y: yeah) Very nice person. He's Greek.

Y: Is he dead?

H: He's Greek. No, no, no. No! He's got, he's got forty shops. At the time I worked with them there was only three right on Essex Street.

Y: What did you do?

H: A meat wrapper. I used to wrap the meats. And I used to use the iron too. Yeah. Now they got machines. The time we had the hand irons.

Y: Yeah. Were there, did you hear accidents while you were working at Raytheon. I mean uh, like you injured yourself.

H: No, but that wasn't much. No, it didn't, you know.

Y: I mean it was a safe job?

H: Yeah, oh yeah. (Y: Yeah?) Yeah, it was all right.

Y: And what about the accident you mentioned yesterday in the mills? A woman was caught on her hair? Can you tell me about that?

H: Oh! That's, I don't know, because that would have happened (Y: whatever you were told), that happened, I heard it in the (--) You know, they had the 1912 uh, thing? (Y: Strike?) On the common. You know, they had things years ago. I don't know how many years ago, they had something in the common. And they were suppose to, they had the 1912 strike, the re-action, somebody had the re-action, you know, some other woman came over, got on the stage and say about the 1912 [unclear]. And she was suppose to be the woman that lost, the machine caught her hair. See, pulled all her scalp out. And they're suppose to name a place [Tiola Way?]. That's what I was talking yesterday. They never did.

Y: T-O-L (--)

H: Tiola. T-I-O-L-A. Tiola Way.

Y: That was the name of the woman?

H: Of the woman, yeah.

Y: Who, was she, did she die?

H: Yeah, she's dead now, yeah, but (--)

Y: No, I mean because of the accident. She did not die?

H: No, she didn't die of the accident. But uh, but her daughters, I haven't seen her daughters. She at the mall there, there a place at the mall there. I don't know if she's still there. But they're suppose to name that years ago, but never did. That's what I told the, (Y: Yeah, Mayor) Mayor yesterday. He says he don't remember. he's young anyway.

Y: Yeah. He says he doesn't remember in 1920.

H: Yeah, yeah. Well it should be in the, it should be in the city hall. (Y: Yeah) They should have things in the city hall.

Y: Right. (H: Yeah) And uh, I mean uh, did you hear other accidents when you were young in the mills. I mean those belts, some people told me that those belts, you know, before (--)

H: Oh the belts, the belts there, yeah.

Y: Caught their hair, or uh (--)

H: Well this is the woman that caught her hair in the belts there in the frame. But I didn't see it. I mean that was, I mean that happened (--)

Y: No, I mean you didn't see it, but did you hear stories like that?

H: Because sir, Sir I came her in 1913. This happened (--) (Y: yeah) So there was a strike in 1922. I think my father was in it too. I remember the horses there by the city hall, and the cops with their billy, you know, with their stick. I remember that. That's all I remember. I don't think I'm too used, much used to you.

Y: You are good. You are good. Don't worry that uh, you are a little bit nervous that the microphone is in front of you.

H: No, no, I mean that's all I can remember. I mean I, you know?

Y: No, that's fine. I mean uh, that was sixty years ago some of this stuff.

H: Yeah, a long time. My sister, I mean she's younger than me, but she worked in the Woolen Mill long, longer than I did.

Y: Maybe I should go to talk to her.

H: I don't know. I mean she, my younger sister, she lives in North Andover. I don't know. I told my young sisters that I was going to meet with you, you know? He says, "well we're going to talk to Lucy, see if she wants to do." Because somebody else approached her I think.

Y: Lucy is your sister?

H: My sister Lucy [unclear].

Y: Yeah. And uh, what kind of entertainment did you have, you know, in those years. How did you, you said you like going to the movies. What else, dancing?

H: I was at the movies.

Y: What about dancing?

H: Oh. Oh I used to go dancing here years ago. We went to the (--) That's after later on. You know, we used to go to the Mason Street Club. (Y: Mason Street?) Yeah, Mason Street CLub. Mason Street and Water Street there. You don't know much about Lawrence, yeah.

Y: No I don't.

H: And later on, like in oh, 19, what was it? When did I get a car? In 1966 I think I got a car. I got a car. I was driving.

Y: This was the first car?

H: Yeah. And uh, we used to go with my friends. I used to take them. We used to go to

Revere, we used to go to the Commodore. I used to drive.

SIDE ONE ENDS

SIDE TWO BEGINS.

Y: How did you go laundry? How did you wash your clothes in those days?

H: Oh! I remember you had a big tub. Tub with two things in the side. You know, wooden tub in the house. After I got married, but I lived with my in-laws, and they had a tub in the kitchen. Big tub. Let's see, this, this big huh? And on this side there'd be the thing to wash, you know, the like grooves, you know, like to wash, and on this side. And we have to put water, heat the water. And scrub the clothes in the tub.

Y: What about when you were working at Raytheon. What did you have? A washing machine, or did you wash the (--)

H: You'd go, you go (--)

Y: When you were working at Raytheon?

H: At Raytheon there used to be uh, they used to have places where you'd wash clothes. You know, laundromat. (Y: Umhm) That time they had laundromat.

Y: Right. Yeah.

H: But years ago when they was young you had a scrub board. (Y: yeah) You used to do it in the sink too. You know, with the little scrub board, you know?

Y: Yeah. And uh, [coughs] what about ice boxes? Do you remember ice box?

H: Oh gee, we used to have ice. (Y: How did you?) You used to pay the ice. (Y: Yeah, how?) And put it in the thing. I think twenty-five cents, ten cents. The ice man used to bring the ice on with the [unclear] and put it in your ice box.

Y: Did it keep cool?

H: You had to do what you had to do there. The big piece of ice. Put it in the ice box and put the stuff in.

Y: Do you remember did they have ice boxes at the work place. In the Wood Mill did they have ice boxes for your food?

H: I don't remember. Oh, I don't remember.

Y: No?

H: We we didn't ever put our food away in there, or nothing. We used to bring their bags.

Y: What about Raytheon? Did you have refrigerators?

H: Well I told you, I told you Raytheon, we used to bring it and we used to cook there.
[Laughs]

Y: Cook? I mean real things, or just reheat coffee?

H: We used to heat up, we used to heat up, we used to bring, we used to make things. We used to have parties you know, when we used to (--) Well not while working. You know, we used to bring the stuff and then we used to heat up the stuff and have parties. We used to have Macaroni too.

Y: It must have been fun. Were there, you know, in the mill there were section hands, or overseers, or whatever.

H: Yeah, section hand. Yeah, section hand.

Y: There was such a person at Raytheon? Did they check you, what you, how you soldered [unclear]?

H: And yeah, there was a floor, floor girl they used to call that. Not section hand and everything like the mill. Floor girl they used to call it.

Y: It was girl, not a man?

H: Huh?

Y: Not a man!

H: And they had some men too. Yeah, they had them.

Y: What did they do?

H: Well they'd come around look, you know, this and that. That's to see.

Y: Did you give her a little bit macaroni too, after you (--)

H: [Laughs] I wouldn't give them nothing.

Y: She didn't say anything that you were uh, honest?

H: No, no, no.

Y: No?

H: We used to have parties.

Y: How did she treat you? I mean was she nice? How(--)

H: Yeah, she was nice. I knew her, her name was Caruso. I remember her. I still see her once in awhile. Yeah. They were okay. And that thing there that I gave you, we were, that was a charm school, you know? They show us how to sit down. You noticed it. That's suppose to be a charm school, you know? To sit.

Y: At the work place? At the Raytheon?

H: At Raytheon. Didn't you see the picture there? We were sitting. There was the woman there showing you how you should sit, and how you shouldn't sit. You know, well when you go out.

Y: I did not, yeah, I did not read it. While you were working you should sit in a certain position?

H: Oh no. No. While working, not while working. This is, used to go out to the, they used to have a separate thing, you know? Teach you how to be charming?

Y: Charming? [H: laughs] So when you were at Raytheon did you have life insurance, social security, this kind of stuff?

H: I had nothing.

Y: Nothing?

H: No.

Y: How did you feel about that? I mean if you are sick what did you do?

H: Nothing I guess. I don't know. I don't remember. Thank God I was never sick there. I'm sick now. Damn I get sick now. Which I (--)

Y: Do you have insurance now? (H: Huh?) Do you have insurance now?

H: No, I have just Medicare, which they take \$24.00 and change out of it. That's all I have. Medicare. They pay part and then I have to pay the rest. Yeah.

Y: And so you don't remember if you had health insurance, or uh (--)

H: No, I don't remember ever using anything like that. I know in uh, in DeMoulas they had uh,

thing. They used to take part of it from our check, you know? And part they'd pay. Yeah.

Y: Although you know, you said it was long time ago when you worked in Wood Mills and then later. If you compare both jobs, which one did give you more satisfaction, or uh, which one was better. I mean did you, if you (--)

H: Of all my, even the one (--)

Y: If you compare the textile, working Ayers and Wood Mill, and then compare it with Raytheon, which job give you more uh (--)

H: Raytheon!

Y: Raytheon?

H: Yeah, because, maybe because I was younger at that time in Textile. But the textile, they really, they had it hard. The people after that, they had it hard. You know, you get a lot of these older people that had a hard time. (Y: At the Raytheon?) No, at the mills.

Y: Mills, uh huh.

H: See. See. I didn't to me. I was always happy-go-lucky anyway.

Y: Umhm. I'm a musician. I'm interested in singing.

H: Oh yeah, sure!

Y: And I play uh cello and so forth. So therefore I always ask people what kind of songs, or did they sing songs, or did you sing songs while you were working at Raytheon? Or other people, did they sing?

H: Oh, I don't know. (Y: You don't remember?) I don't even remember about that. Yeah. But I know when we went to the club, Mason Street Club, I used to sing. [Laughs] I was a happy-go-lucky person. I always liked, yeah. (Y: What kind of songs?) I love it. I love music. Well (--)

Y: Italian songs, or popular songs.

H: No. Italian songs, [unclear]. "All of Me, why don't you take all of me." You know, all those. And then when I went to the, when I went to the Oliver School you know, I sang on the stage. I was sitting, I sang "Mother McCree." You know? (Y: Yeah) When I went there the other day they had something there. They says, "well would you like to sing again?" "Who remembers the song, I says now at that time?" "Mother McCree", that's what I did.

Y: Well you have a nice uh, still a nice voice.

H: You know. I used to love to sing. Yeah. Yeah.

Y: Another thing I ask, and people don't remember, is uh, did you tell jokes to your friends, I mean in those days?

H: No, I was never a joke teller. (Y: No?) No.

Y: Or did they uh, did they tell the joke?

H: During the war times.

Y: During the war times?

Unknown voice: I worked in the Wood Mill.

H: See, see, that's what he wants.

Unknown voice: Spinning, not spinning, reeling.

H: What is that?

Unknown voice: What room were you in?

H: I was uh, a spinner. I mean a doffer, but I didn't work long. See, then I worked in Raytheon. I said, that's why he should get people that (--)

Unknown voice: Well that's where I spent my whole life, in Paper Mill. Oxford, Champion International. Then they sold it to Oxford. Oxford sold it to Boyd.

H: See he should get people that remember long (--)

Unknown voice: What is it that you're interested in?

Y: Uh, I tell you. We are done soon, okay? And what about a telephone? Did you have a telephone the first time in your life?

H: I don't remember having a telephone. (Y: You don't?) I don't remember having a telephone. No, that's a long time again, after the first telephone I had, you know.

Y: So at Raytheon, if someone would call you from outside, did they tell you, "Helen you have a telephone call."

H: Oh no. (Y: No?) No way. Nobody would call. No.

Unknown voice: We wouldn't have been able to use the phone. [Laughs]

H: No, no. [Chuckles] No.

Unknown voice: It had to be an emergency to use the phone.

H: Yeah, if it's an emergency, but.

Y: No, I mean if someone uh, if someone called you from outside and uh, that was (--)

H: No. No. No, no, no. (Y: Yeah) Umhm.

Y: And uh, what else? Uh, could you tell me how did you heat your home when you were young, you know, when you got married there. What was uh, in those days.

H: They had a stove. I remember they had a stove.

Unknown voice: They used coal, or coke. That's what you used.

H: Wood, yeah coke. Yeah, yeah.

Unknown voice: Or wood if you could afford it. Yeah.

H: I remember you used to go and pick up things from the railroads.

Unknown voice: You used to go on the railroad track and pick up the coal that was left over, (H: Yeah, on the railroad track) while the trains were running and refueling.

H: That's right.

Unknown voice: The guys, our fathers used to stand over there with bags of all kinds, wagons. And when the train went by they went in the track and they picked up.

H: Yeah, that's right.

Unknown voice: They picked up. Oh, I have a very good memory.

H: That's good!

Y: Maybe uh, yeah, I should talk to you. (H: Sit down)

Unknown voice: I have a very good memory. I have [unclear].

H: [Unclear]

Y: Anyway, that is the end of talking to Helen. Thank you very much. It was helpful, although you don't think it was. It was very helpful. Thank you.

H: Thank you.